(c) what is the estimated cost of the linkage project; and

(d) whether the World Bank's assistance is proposed to be sought for this work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI P. K. THUNGON): (a) to (d) A National Prespective for water Resources Development prepared by Government envisages inter-linkages between various Peninsular rivers and Himalayan rivers separately for transfer of water from water rich basins to water short basins for optimum utilisation of water resources. Government has established National Water Development Agency (NWDA) in 1982 for firming up these proposals. A total of 36 water transfer links, 17 under Peninsular component and 19 under Himalayan component have been identified by NWDA.

While office studies of 12 links under Peninsular component have been completed, studies of balance Peninsular links and all links under Himalayan component have been included in VIII Plan. In addition, investigation of 9 links of Peninsular component and 3 links of Himalayan component have been included in the VIII Plan Programme of the Agency. In the absence of detailed project reports the cost aspect and its source of funding cannot be firmed up.

Extent of Water-Logged and Saline Areas in the Country

230. SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a Committee was set up under the Chairmanship of Shri Desai, ex-Advisor to the Planning Commission to identify the extent of waterlogged and saline areas in irrigated command in the country;

(b) what are the recommendations of the Committee the remedial measures suggested by it;

(c) whether the Desai Committees report has been published by Government; and

(d) whether the recommendations of the Committee have been accepted by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI P. K. THUNGON): (a) The Working Group was set up under the Chairmanship of Shri C. G. Desai, Adviser (I&CAD), Planning Commission with representatives from Ministry of Agriculture, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Central Ground Water Board, Central Water Commission and Command Area Development Wing of the Ministry of Water Resources to identify the problem areas affected by water-logging/salinity/alkalinity in existing irrigation projects in the country based on available data and to suggest suitable remedial measures for tackling the problem.

(b) The Working Group inter-alia recommended preventive and remedial measures which included mainly monitoring of ground water levels and excess salt consideration, maintaining drainage network and providing drainage system, wherever necessory, in the command areas.

(c) and (d) The report of the Working Group have been circulated to the States and other concerned Ministries/Organisations inviting their views for taking necessary steps on the recommendations made by the Working Group.

Water Scarcity

231. SHRI GHUFRAN AZEM: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Governments attention has been drawn to a news item captioned "Massive water scarcity predicted" as reported in the Hindustan Times dated 8-11-93;

(b) if so, whether a study conducted by Population Action International, it has been revealed that by the year 2025 there would be chronic water scarcity; and